

Testimony of Gene Williams

RE: SB223 - Senate Judiciary Committee

1/22/09

I appreciate the opportunity to comment before this body in opposition to SB 223. I oppose Hate Crime legislation. I reject the idea that this kind of legislation is based upon. There is no group of people in America that requires extra protection under law.

No matter what the group may be, its members do not require more protection than any other group in this nation. The law should provide equal protection for everyone and I believe that it does. I am aware that this was not always the case in America. I am old enough to have experienced living in my country when the law frequently did not provide the same protection for me, as an American of African descent, as it did for white Americans.

Those days are behind us now. It is ironic that this kind of legislation is proposed today, two days after the American people elected a black president. This president, during his successful campaign, stressed his desire to be viewed as a post-racial candidate. His election demonstrates that the Bill under discussion here today is unnecessary and in fact counter productive. Hate Crimes law should be repealed. They should not be expanded to include another group.

When pathological racism and the Jim Crow laws that legalized the routine humiliation and segregation of black Americans, there was no need for extra legal protection. What was needed was equal protection under law. That did not exist in the nation that I was born into.

The struggle for Civil Rights was won. The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King was three short days ago. In my view, Hate Crimes law is insulting to his memory. He gave his life to achieve an America in which people would be judged by their character and would be equal under law. Dr. King did not struggle to create an America in which certain groups would be afforded more protection than others. That is precisely what he fought against.

Hate Crimes law has been used as a political tool to silence those who do not, for various reasons, agree with the homosexual lifestyle. Homosexual political activists are particularly resentful of Christians who know that homosexual behavior is a sin according to the Bible. They do not view homosexuality as a political issue, but it certainly is. Homosexual activists have made it so.

Canada has Hate Crimes tribunals that allow accusations of anti-homosexual comments to be the basis of governmental sanctions of the accused. There is a pastor who has been punished for preaching a sermon from the Bible that expresses the Biblical view of homosexuality. A Catholic bishop has been sanctioned by this tribunal that appears to consider the accused guilty until proven innocent.

Homosexual activists seek to make all criticism of homosexuality illegal. Sweden passed a hate speech law in 2002 including "church sermons" subject to the laws restrictions. Ake Green, pastor of a Pentecostal church, was sentenced to one month in prison after being convicted of "hate speech against homosexuals".

Senate Bill 223 is presented as necessary to protect the safety and the civil rights of homosexuals. It is neither of these things. It is a stepping stone toward silencing Christians who adhere to the Biblical view of homosexuality. That kind of legislation has no place in the America of today. I ask that you reject it.

Gene Williams

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